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Threads for the Soul's Garment



Isabella K. Eldert



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THREADS FOR THE SOUL'S GARMENT

ISABELLA K. ELDERT

*With loving thought of those who have entered
"the place of light and refreshment."*



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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>The Snowdrops' Song</i>	9
<i>What God is Like Unto</i>	10
<i>The Passing of the Shadow</i>	11
<i>"The Whole Creation Groaneth"</i>	12
<i>Result</i>	13
<i>Opportunity</i>	14
<i>The Birdie's Love-Song</i>	16
<i>Ascension Lilies</i>	17
<i>Trust</i>	18
<i>The Soul's Mask</i>	19
<i>The Christ-Tide</i>	20
<i>Christmas Morn</i>	21
<i>Whisperings</i>	22
<i>Now</i>	23
<i>To Victory's Heights</i>	24
<i>Thou Shalt be Comforted</i>	25
<i>The Aftermath Cometh</i>	26
<i>The Other Side</i>	27

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Clouds</i>	28
<i>Thought</i>	30
<i>"Sorrowful, Yet Always Rejoicing"</i>	31
<i>Thy Cross</i>	33
<i>The Dirge of the Old Year</i>	34
<i>To Waters Still and Pastures Green</i>	35
<i>His Soul</i>	36
<i>Life's Threads</i>	37
<i>When Days Are Dark</i>	38
<i>Mary, the Mother of Our Lord</i>	40
<i>How Shall They Face the World</i>	42
<i>Love's Vision</i>	44
<i>"Peace at the Last"</i>	45
<i>Resurrection-Links</i>	46
<i>De Profundis</i>	47
<i>When You and I</i>	49
<i>The Vision of the Stars</i>	50
<i>From Earth to Heaven</i>	53
<i>Recompense</i>	54
<i>When Sorrow Comes</i>	55

THREADS FOR THE SOUL'S GARMENT

God touched a soul that long had dormant lain,
And straightway it awoke to consciousness
Of all its poverty, its nakedness,
Its want. In solemn silence vision came
Of life arrayed as life might be, and swift
Was born the knowledge that within it lay
Large possibilities of raiment fresh
And beautiful. Re-vitalized, intent
Upon its work, it rose and into space
Projected far seven strong foundation-lines:
First love and next obedience, faith nearby,
Calm fortitude, contentment, joy and peace,—
Each perfect of its kind but all too frail
T'endure the daily strain of earth-desires
Without the spirit's aid. Released from bondage sore
It wove the garment for the soul to wear
By drawing from the heart of every wound,
Each thing that pleased (e'en love of sky and trees,
The birds and flowers, the babbling brook
Or ocean deep) an essence which it changed
Into fair glistening threads, and wove each one
Around and in and out those soul-laid lines.
Abreast the swelling bosom of thought-waves,
Within the caves beneath heart's surface hid
The spirit found amid débris great pearls
Most lustrous-white when woven into place.
Where tear-drops fell (as sometimes it must be)
There God flashed sunlight, and like diamonds
They shone, while softly over warp and woof
He threw a great protecting power like veil
Of rainbow hue.

*Oh, soul that never dies
Thus clothed! Oh spirit blest, absorbing God!
Heaven would not part ye, earth cannot, and thus
Forever one, salvation ye attain.
In midst of discord, shedding peace; in midst
Of suffering giving of your best; in midst
Of trials standing firm, pass on to bliss!*
Amen.

THE SNOWDROPS' SONG

We're never unhappy, we Snowdrops, for lo!
E'en under the sod we are growing, we know.
So when dark are the days, most wintry the weather,
We just cuddle down close and whisper together,
"It's all right as it is, 'till with its warm glow,
Love opens the way, and we rise thro' the snow."

WHAT GOD IS LIKE UNTO

What God is like unto? Ah, this I ne'er can tell
Whilst in its mortal covering my soul on earth doth
 dwell;
But when, its bonds all sunder'd, my soul shall
 swiftly rise
In joyful, rapturous gladness triumphant toward
 the skies,
Each earthly shackle broken, my own, true self
 new-born,
Clothed in immortal garments by souls redeemèd
 worn,
All avenues of Knowledge thrown open to me,
 wide,—
Then shall I see my Lord, my God, and so be satis-
 fied.

THE PASSING OF THE SHADOW

The doves are at the window with their token of
release,
While hush as winter moonlight breathes a message
full of peace.
From hands of God's own angels mercies fall and
pave the way
For the passing on of shadow and the entrance of
the day.

“THE WHOLE CREATION GROANETH”

Heart of the universe of God, dost groan
'Neath sighs and tears and sobs of sin-stained men?
Dost struggle under barriers made? Dost free
Thyself by sudden wrench and wield abroad
Calamity and death? Oh, tell me then!
Were heav'n again on earth would'st thou be less
Severe? Would'st travail less? And sweetly
smile

Where now thou bringest pain, its measurement
Man's capability to learn? Would'st give
But gentle touch where now tornadoes blow?
In place of thunder, would men hear the word
Wafted by breeze? Oh, tell me, Heart encased
Within this universe of old! Were we
To do heav'n's will, heal hearts of brother-men,
Were peace to reign supreme, would'st thou be more
Of God and less of pain? Strange secrets lurk
Within thy bosom deep.

Methinks I hear
The answer whispered soft: “In every breath
I draw, I gather in the atmosphere
Of man—God's agent placed upon the earth
To bring forth all of good. Thy lesson learn,—
Man's primal power wield, and waves will still.”

RESULT

My life-work it lay 'mid the souls of weak men
And I said to myself time oft and again,
"Can I do it so bravely, so wisely and well
That of God's loving kindness it surely will tell?
Can I teach them the way to do ever the right
Though bitter the struggle, most weary the fight?
Can I, so imperfect, unerringly lead?
So often soul-hungered, other wayfarers feed?"

Through the shadows of doubt a Voice came unto
me,

"Child, tremble not, fear not—'tis sufficient for
thee

To feel that God gave thee thy life-work on earth,
That in heaven lies its goal and in heaven was its
birth.

Thou'rt responsible held but responsive thou art
And the Lord of the harvest will do well His part
In sustaining thy strength, so rejoice and to-day,
Asking not the result, when He calls thee, obey."

OPPORTUNITY

A NEW YEAR'S GREETING

Did some one tell thee through the land
There came a firm yet gracious hand
To furnish weakened souls with cheer,
From hearts bowed down to banish fear—
Thou'dst greet this glad, this happy year.

Did some one tell thee that when days
Would seem the darkest, then the rays
Of hope would burst upon thy sight,
That thenceforth thou would'st walk in light—
Thou'dst greet this glad, this happy year.

Did some one tell thee that when most
Thou neededst comfort, then a host
Of angels pure on thee would shower
Hope, love and peace—a heavenly dower—
Thou'dst greet this glad, this happy year.

Did some one tell thee that sweet joy
Would soon be thine, thou would'st employ
Thy moments well and sing thy praise
For all the happy, God-giv'n days
Of this most glad, most happy year.

Would'st know all this? Then, this thing more:
Before thee stands an open door;
Within the room beyond it seen
Thou'lt find what else had never been
To make thee glad this happy year.

Some opportunity to bless,
Some load to lift, some wrong suppress.
Echo with deed each duty call,
So in Christ's name to thee and all
Shall be a glad, a happy year.

THE BIRDIES' LOVE-SONG

Hear the twittering of the song-bird
As he flies from bough to bough;
Hear him calling to his nest-mate,
"Sweetheart, sweetheart, tell me how
Love did bind us, love did teach us
How to live, dear. Sweetheart, how?"

And the birdie in that home-nest
Answers thus with tender coo:
"Sweetheart, dear heart, one can never
Put in words all love will do.
Cease your flying, come and kiss me—
Sweetheart, dear heart, I love you."

ASCENSION LILIES

From out the thickest, blackest mud the fair white
lilies rise;
E'en so while in the world they stay may souls
draw near the skies,
Lift faces pure and sweet to heaven, tread softly and
abide
The coming of the day foretold by heart's ascen-
sion-tide.

TRUST

Pure trust? Most mortals know it not—
That trust which feeleth ne'er a blot
Of doubt on what the other doth.
Such thing as mortal men call trust
Doth give the lie, doth turn to dust
The thread of truth, defiles the troth
'Twixt man and man, 'twixt heart and heart:
Doth reckon in a worldly mart
How much t'expect, how much to give.
In lieu of knowledge cometh fear;
In lieu of heartsease groweth care
Until we scarce would wish to live.

That other trust? Ah! Well some know
The power it wields to make them grow
Anear to God—to make them rise
From out the midst of choking care,
From hell beneath until they dare
Aspire to reach the highest skies,
Sweet realms of peace. Forever sure
Come weal come woe, trust doth endure
'Twixt them and God and hearts they love,
All doubt, all untrue thought they sink,
And weave a chain whose ev'ry link
Is fastened close and clinched above.

Such trust is clad in garments white;
Wears jewels seen in darkest night;
Its heart pure gold, its steps all true.
Its song the same—the old yet new.

THE SOUL'S MASK

Smiling face and aching heart,
Peals of laughter, then pain's dart
Piercing through our very soul—
For the falseness, toll, bell, toll.

Jesting words and memory sad,
Joy-notes struck whilst all unclad,
Bruised, sore-wounded feels the soul—
For the falseness, toll, bell, toll.

THE CHRIST-TIDE

Mystical blending of birth and of life,
Mystical power to put away strife,
Mystical cleansing of hearts from all sin,
Mystical raiment born from within.

Mystical tide with meaning most sweet,
Mystical truth with goodness replete,
Mystical shadow and mystical light,
Mystical vision of mystical might.

Mystical love and mystical thought,
Mystical message by God's angels brought.
Oh, mortals take heed, and see the day dawn,
Heralded thus on that first Christmas Morn!

CHRISTMAS MORN

When wakes the sun on Christmas morn,
 Turn to the East for there was born
Our Jesu, Saviour, Love divine,
 Our Prince of Peace. Thy heart and mine
Let rise in solemn gladness, then
 Pray God His birth in hearts of men.
So shall we our own blessing reap,
 The meaning true of Christmas keep.

WHISPERINGS

When the daylight fades into twilight shades
I send a sweet thought unto thee
In an Angel's care; she will bear it there
And tell thee it cometh from me.

Dost thou hear it, dear, as thou sittest there
And thinkest of days yet to be?
Dost thou feel her wings as she stoops and sings,
"Thy love sends her love unto thee?"

Dost thou answer then with a deep heart-throb,
"Oh, Spirit, whoever thou art!
Take my message now, my most sacred vow,
I love her with all of my heart."

NOW

Build bridges to-day lest to-morrow shall find you
Unable to gather the timber you'll need ;
Work now in life's garden lest evening shall see you
Too weary to sow even tiniest seed.

TO VICTORY'S HEIGHTS

The inner-whispered word he knew and rose
Through cloud-flecked day or sun or starry night.
Borne upward 'mid the silences, his flight
Safe measured by the growth of soul. In throes
Of deepest agony he fought dread foes
Within his breast: yet beckoning on, the light
Of days to be—vouchsafed in vision bright—
His lodestar shone. No other sign he chose.

 This his reward: That as he higher rose
And deeper drank at fount whence wisdom
 flows,
Led by his song th' unseen the real to men
 became—
Not earth but heaven their pilgrim-aim.
Nor asked he more. But one onlooking found
His work as poet, prophet, priest, love-crowned.

THOU SHALT BE COMFORTED

Let but the rays of God's glad sunlight fall upon
thy tears

And straight a rainbow shall be born—hope scatter
all thy fears.

THE AFTERMATH COMETH

Along the Aisle of Days we walk so blind we cannot see
That fairest buds are ripening fast in wondrous mystery.
At Sorrow's womb we look aghast nor dream that
through the might
Of pangs untold may birth be giv'n to resurrection-
light.

THE OTHER SIDE

When upon you fall life's shadows
And the day seems dark and drear,
All unclouded, bathed in glory
Shines the other side anear.

Nearer far than mortals dream it,
Just a filmy veil between.
Rise ye then ye weary people,
From the East the sunlight gleam!

Rise and let the gloomy shadows
Fade from out your gaze to-day!
Upward glancing, see the radiance
'Yond the clouds stream o'er your way.

Here or there—what is it, tell me!
Heartaches prove the strength of love;
Shadows mean that light is shining,
Earth foretells the heaven above.

Oh, the gladness of the Vision,
When though earth is dark and drear,
For our comfort, bathed in glory,
Shines the other side anear.

CLOUDS

"Oh, clouds dispel and let the light
Burst full and clear upon my sight!"
Thus moaned a Soul.

The answer came: "Dear Soul, remove
Thyself the clouds, thy faith thus prove
Then reach thy goal."

"Myself the clouds so black, so drear,
Uplift alone? In mercy hear,
Lend me some aid."

Again the Voice: "The clouds look black
Because in trust thou now dost lack.
Thyself them made."

"Myself them made? Oh, God! Not say
Such bitter word when I do pray
For grace bestowed."

"Thou prayest child, and then thou dost
On thine own strength rely. Thou must
Remove the load."

"How can I do so hard a thing?
Wilt thou not then in pity bring
An angel nigh?"

"The angels, child, are ever near,
Their absence thou need'st never fear,
Love cannot die.
The light still shines with radiance bright
And clouds but prove that in thy might
Not that of faith
Thou trustest most. Cast self aside,
Lean on My strength, make Me thy guide
For life, by death."

“Dear God, forgive! Like beacon-light
That guides a storm-tossed bark at night,
Thy word to me.
And though my goal seem far away,
Though shadows sometimes dim life’s day,
I’ll trust in Thee.”

THOUGHT

Though I should speak in unknown tongue and
 seem so far away
Yet would I reach in thought thy heart, thy thought
 my pulse would sway.
And while I'd feebly call thy name (to human
 sense) yet strong
"Within thy soul thou'dst feel my voice, thy heart
 would catch my song.

“SORROWFUL, YET ALWAYS REJOICING”

A sepulchre within thy heart hast built,
Between its narrow walls hast dared to lay
God-given love, God-given hope, and pave
The way about thee with thy means so that
The charnel-sadness of thy life doth chill
Well-nigh to death those other souls? Know'st not
Thy fault? See'st not thy selfishness exclude
The sun's glad rays which stream apace? Canst thou
Absolve thyself when those about thee need
Thy help, thy cheer?

Fain would'st thou tread the garden fair of peace?
Would'st rest thee in its shade and cull to wear
Upon thy breast its lilies pure and sweet?
If thou could'st enter it with that which now
Thou cherishest so close, a withering blight
From thee would fall on every flower, the birds
Would muted be, and to thy soul the Voice
Of God would speak: “What dost thou here? De-
part,
The bitter knowledge of thy selfishness
Within thy heart!”

I would not ask thy sorrow flung away—
Thy very being knit with it so close—
But with the rod of human sacrifice
Of self I'd have thee gently touch it that
The waters of sweet sympathy may flow
From thee to all mankind. The Gardener Who
Hath planted in thy heart the power to grieve,
Doth long for thee to bring forth blossoms white
Of thought and deed, t'enrich with blessings fair
Hearts everywhere.

What if thy aching breast hold healing balm
For some sore-stricken one? What if thy smile
Shall turn to sweet the bitter in his cup
Of life, remove the screen which hath debarred
His seeing God, and to his soul bring calm?
Within no sepulchre thou'dst shrine thy grief;
Into the world thou'dst take it, glorified
By love; though sorrowful, thou would'st rejoice
With heart and voice.

THY CROSS

Hold thy cross up straight before thee,
Never think it aught but gold,
And be sure the dear Lord gave thee
What would best thy strength unfold.

Had He wished to make it lighter
Thou might'st had it feather-weight;
But that Faith might shine the brighter
What He gave to thee looks great.

Use thy power of firm endurance,
Ay, e'en bravely to the end;
What thou thinkest now a hindrance
Shall thy soul to glory send.

Thou shalt see thy cross in heaven
With thy best thoughts sparkling bright,
And then know to thee 'twas given
As a help to find the light.

THE DIRGE OF THE OLD YEAR

The Old Year goes, its flight men mourn.
Why grieve they now? Each day in turn
Hath passed and they have thought
'Twas but a day. Had they but wrought
(Knowing that fruit must come from seed)
With heart and prayer to make each deed
Shine like a star in garb most fair
For their immortal souls to wear,
No requiem would they sing to-night
But see the year in flood of light
Recede and join the æons old,—
Its memory framed in burnished gold.

TO WATERS STILL AND PASTURES GREEN

Bring to me one who can with music stay my grief;
Not with a dirge would I be quieted but with some
chant

Melodious, sweet, point me the way again to
heaven's gate,

Wide open fling the doors now closed between my
heart and God.

Show me the parable of love all centered in the Man
Of Sorrows crowned with gracious smiles Who
midst of agony

Could yet of others' welfare think and pardon ene-
mies.

Sing to me not of that with which I'm choked but
comfort me

With that I lack. Lead to my Shepherd and to
waters still

Until my soul shall bathe in them, my hand shall
surely clasp

The staff He'll hold for me and I shall face the
pastures green.

So shall I then be comforted.

HIS SOUL

Suppose a Soul were failing quite to grow
On earth, that basest passions choked so close
The good, it could not free itself and rise
Beyond the clay-bound thought. Suppose that Soul
Were loosed from body's chains and taken where
Eternity's real life it might begin,
Its truest freedom learn. Suppose your love
For him lived on in wondrous-pulsing thought,—
Dear Mother his, would your tears fall?

Suppose a Soul grown beauteous white were borne
Away one day to Paradise the while
You stayed behind. Suppose you knew that Soul
Had earned a place and taken it with saints,
That toil and loss were over quite, and joyed
That higher service had been won. Ah, yes!
Suppose all this, yet being true within
To aching breast where he lay pillow'd once,—
Dear Mother his, would your tears fall?

LIFE'S THREADS

If I could take the threads which fall about me soft
And by one stroke quick weave them into pattern
rare,

Would I not err? Would I not spoil the shape or
mar,

Perchance, some spot where whitest thread should
form device

I know not now? Would I not better leave to Him
Who gives each thread its own peculiar, lustrous
hue,

The weaving, too?

And though in childish ignorance I sometimes wish
The pattern wove, full well I know—love's lesson
learned—

That every thread is falling safe in its own place;
By sudden gleam of prophecy bestowed, in awe be-
hold

Life's aftermath with raiment for my soul to wear,
It woven here and every thread reflecting bright

The Weaver's light.

WHEN DAYS ARE DARK

Why dwell among the shadows when the light is
shining clear?

Why chant a miserere when from earth to heaven
drawn near

Outrings a song of triumph in whose strains you
may take part,

And echoes soft your voice repeat to some near-
fainting heart?

Why stand beneath the ladder when to climb means
stepping where

Will come the larger vision and you'll breathe the
purer air?

Why blind your eyes with cobwebs when great
glories are revealed,

And they who learn to read it find the book of
life ne'er sealed.

From thickets of disquietude sweet thoughts of
peace may spring,

O'er quicksands of uncertainty hope spread her
silver wing.

'Mid tangles of discouragement fair buds of promise
grow,

And tempests of heart's cravings may leave calm
with after glow.

You know how live the flowers in the dreary winter
days,
Or how responds their seed-life to the influence
of rays
Of sunlight piercing through the ground where all
seems dark and cold,
How 'mid the soft white petals there is formed
the heart of gold?

Eternity's great branches, what our finite minds
term years,
Have proved a Great Protecting Power at work
despite men's fears;
And so just let the sunshine 'mid the shadows glisten
bright,
And mounting on Faith's ladder rest your eyes
with heaven's light.

MARY, THE MOTHER OF OUR LORD

Dear Mary, Mother faithful! At the cradle of the
Lord
Didst thou comprehend quite fully all the beauty
of the Word?
Didst thou see in vision lofty all the healing He
would bring?
Didst thou hear His voice so holy with God's praises
ever ring?
Didst thou see the cross of Calvary, hear His
agonizèd cry?
Didst thou see His soul departing—know that it
would never die?

Dear Mary, Mother faithful! Mother-love and
mother-hope
Filled thy mother-bosom heaving when upon fair
Bethlehem's slope
First were heard the Christmas angels telling of
the wondrous birth,
Bringing tidings of salvation e'en while souls dwell
on the earth.

Dear Mary, Mother faithful! Jesu's holy Mother
dear,
What was then beheld in shadow now thou view'st
in vision clear.
How thy heart must swell with rapture as thy dear
Son's armies grow,
As those hosts of countless thousands with God's
holiest light aglow
March so softly yet so surely, conquering ever in
this sign—
“*Via crucis, via lucis, Jesu, Saviour, Love divine.*”

Dear Mary, Mother faithful! Once again we sing
the birth
In fair Bethlehem's lowly stable,—hail the Christ-
Child come to earth;
And while looking at the cradle see above it bend
so sweet
'Thy face, our Jesu's Mother, with God's love and
peace replete.

HOW SHALL THEY FACE THE WORLD ?

A RESURRECTION SONG

How shall they face the world, what raiment shall
they wear,
Those souls who day by day must work allotted task
Whilst inwardly with heart-strings all unstrung
they ask
The shattering of the shell, aye, pray release? Who
dare
Approach those stricken ones, I say, and bid them
tear
From out their life their pain, or tell them gilded
mask
To weave with pleasure's loom, in her fresh bright-
ness bask
Until (untrue to all) they shall forget their prayer?

Oh, what were life if such could for one loss atone!
Full well they know who've suffered most, borne
Sorrow's palm,
That when the pain pressed hard their heaven-sent
balm
Unselfish service was,—an echo from the throne
Of The Eternal Thought. Blest work, heart's
anchor grown,
Fast held them 'mid the storm until with pulse-beat
calm
They knew the road they trod and learned without
alarm
In majesty of grief their victory was won.

How shall they face the world, what raiment shall
they wear
Who, looking at their life through human lens, find
naught
But chasm deep and difficult to cross? All wrought
In wondrous hue their garb so be for love they bear
Of love most infinite some revelation fair
To brother man. Thus robed, their faces turned to
port,
The chasm may they bridge with happiest, heaven-
born thought,
Tread softly and await the glory over there.

LOVE'S VISION

Love's vision sees through fast-barred doors Love's
hidden thought,
And soul doth feel the imprint of each touch of joy
Or pain that's felt by other self, doth see the throbs,
Doth know the struggles fierce of inner man, doth
learn
Somehow the good and ill, doth yearn.
Such love were rare,
Doth ever mean self set aside. What can it do?
"One thing it can." ('Twas unseen voice I heard
when dark
The daylight seemed, and laughter prelude but of
pain.)
"The best gift Love to Love can make is taking self
To God. So Love doth gain and give, were't soon
or late,
An unseen strength to think, to bear, to will, to
serve.
Nor asphodel nor rue need be the signet worn
But violets sweet for faithfulness. No fetter false
Doth bind its acts, but sheafed they are by string
Of pearls, the one end held in heav'n—each pearl a
prayer".
(Strange problem worked
In daily life where stepping-stones not always smooth
Are placed across earth's chasms deep. Strange, did
I say?
Not so, but only rare to human sense the power
Full clear to comprehend the length and breadth,
the depth
And height of God's best gift to man.)

“PEACE AT THE LAST”

Look well for the sunlight all ye who now linger
 Apart in the Valley of Shadows so drear.
Think! Under the frost-hardened ground oft lie
 hidden
 White snowdrops that blossom ere springtime
 draws near.

Who knows but some storm-beaten soul may soon
 anchor
 Anear you and signal for help you can give?
The searchlight of hope will you send thro' the
 tempest
 That he, tho' nigh shipwrecked may see it and
 live?

And what if some weary one aching for kindness
 Shall touch but the hem of your garment and
 smile?
Reward will that be for your sorrow borne bravely?
 Oh, look for the sunlight,—make living worth
 while.

Out heartaches and longings may come large
 fruition,
 Such bountiful harvests from seed you may sow!
The reapers, perchance, you'll not see as they pass
 you,
 Their song of thanksgiving you never may know,

But softly you'll travel the road to the hilltop,
 Life's love and life's duty forever made one.
Each dawn shall encourage, each eventide calm you
 Till with the last sunset will be whispered, “Well
 done”!

RESURRECTION-LINKS

A chain to bind us fast to heaven we ask
Nor see how every common thing of earth
As well as beatific vision hath
Within its being a bright-burnished link
No mortal hand hath forged. Steeped in the drug
Of self, too dull our senses are to search
The heart of each day's happenings for that
Which only makes life real and true. Did we
But read aright the message of the rose,
The mystery of pain, the love of friends,
The cruel sting, the laurel-wreath bestowed
Or crown of thorns; did we with vision clear
Perceive the inner grace of all, believe
That never one thing comes to you, to me,
(Or storm or calm) without its special need,
Soon would we weld strong resurrection-links
Into an endless chain—a circle white
With deeds unselfish, love unfeigned, and know
That heaven on earth begins—God everywhere.

DE PROFUNDIS

Oh, Thou! Who seest deeper far than man
The thought which sways each wanderer from the
fold;
Who knowest best of all the powers of hell,
The poisoned wine they pour out chalice gold,
Their craftiness in binding chains of guilt
About their victim's souls,—is life on earth
The end of all for those who tempest-tossed
By sin dash soul and body on its reefs?
No other world where prodigals may seek
Their Father—God? No candle burning bright
When on that awful wreck death's shadows fall?
No further hope for such when bells are tolled,
When "earth to earth" is said and requiems sung?
Shall breaking hearts live on in agony
Not asking heaven with their loved in hell?
Is every wanderer damned? Is there no spark
Of good, infinitesimal may be,
Alive? At Thy command may not that germ
Be sifted from the rotting mass of chaff,
Be nurtured into strength through angels' care
Ere reaping time shall come? Are there no aisles
Of penitence where disembodied souls
May earn the right to tread their way anear
The throne of grace and there absolved lay down
Regret, remorse forevermore,—within
The circle of Thy love find their name writ?
Out of the deep men cry in agony
"Father, forgive"!

Softly this message came.
Not in earth's balances are weighed the souls
Of men nor earth computed wage e'er paid
Where He The Great Assizer rules, not just
Alone but merciful. Upon thy hearts
The finger of His hand hath traced His mark
Of omnipresence. Then, love being love
Thy tears must cleanse the way for perfect trust.
Through doubt of that unbroken chain which links
All souls to God, be not a stumbling block.
God loves the sinner though the sinner loves
Him not. His way to bring His wanderers home
There none shall know till each one for himself
Shall read his own sad-blotted book of life,
With vision purified shall see a love
More tender, mightier far than aught on earth,
In every happening shall behold his God.

Amen.

WHEN YOU AND I

From body freed in the Beyond shall meet,
Each in the other's eyes will look and read
Forgiveness of misunderstandings here,—
A compensation great but all too late
For happiness on earth. Wherefore to-day
Out fullness of my heart I pray that you
My every thoughtless word and deed forgive
Ere death destroy the human right to choose
The bitter or the sweet. Within my breast
The hope I hold to bless where I have hurt.
The keystone of your life I'd touch with peace
And waft through space though face to face again
We never stand, sure comfort in your need.
I who have watched the destiny of hearts
Find naught but loving service worth their while.
Misunderstandings choke us, cloud our sky
Till in a frenzied whirl of doubt all trust
Is lost. Ah, then our hearts grow faint, our eyes
See not the vision of the land where faith
Is changed to perfect knowledge, hope to sight.
Our ears refuse to hear the wondrous song
That Bethlehem's angels sang when Christ was born.
Embittered grow we when we should know peace.
Oh, friend who once did hold me dear, your soul
And mine shall one day meet, renew their troth.
Meanwhile, on earth forgive and understand!

THE VISION OF THE STARS

*Bright-gemmed the heaven of men's hopes with stars
They would attain but in their hearts despair
Doth swing its leaden weights until they faint:
Thus the recording angel wrote, and wept.*

A crucial test that Vision bright beheld!
So human we in confines of the flesh,
Scarce wonder that we hesitate to scale
Those starlit heights whose beauty Love foretells.
Though spirit ardently desires the flight,
The power to comprehend the length and breadth,
The depth and height of The Eternal Thought
Is rare to finite sense, and thus we faint.
So much of new the future holds in store,
'Twere wisdom to recall the past, its trend
From shadows to the light. Else had the stars
Been unperceived though near at hand they shone.

They who have probed
The mysteries of life, its frailties
Of human kind, its ever varying moods,
Have found beneath the poor, rent garment wrapt
About men's souls another one, dust-freed
And woven with most brilliant threads whose price
He knows, alone, who weaves. Discordant notes—
The circumstance environment may make—
May jar and fret and yet declare themselves
Development's necessity on earth.
Exultant joys and miseries oft
Within the soul may welded be but each
Its separate seed must sow, some mile-stone stamp
For aye with precept learned—a fragment small
Of great, eternal Truth. That Mind which out
From chaos brought forth light, that Law which
sways

The universe—the two but one—reacts
And throbs in every breast, defines although
Men see it not the roadway heavenward.
While spirit solves the mystery of the hour,
Experience wields a magic, mighty wand
With which she opens wide the gates that lead
To wisdom's richest fields, men garnering there
All each has strength to reap. (This have they
proved

Who have attained the heights).

Oh, realms of Truth!

Oh, goal for which men yearn, aglow with flames
Of sacred fire! The ego in me claims
Its heritage and were no other one
To climb the path calm would I go nor fear
The loneliness. Faith brushes doubt aside
And points to that great galaxy of stars
Whose rays or dim to me or luminous
Unsparing knowledge of soul growth reveals
Unerringly. Not for ourselves alone
May you and I press on. No narrow road
We tread, its boundaries the walls of self,
But one vast thronged with a great multitude
Of souls each bearing in itself the germ
Of holiness although most sadly stained
And rent th' enfolding garment, human-frail
The habitation where it dwells on earth.
Not cold our hearts must be nor dumb our lips,
Not faltering our feet as day by day
With all this quivering life close touch we keep.
Think you those brilliant stars will serve as guides
To some glad paradise of full content
If he whose moans we've heard lies prone, by earth
Compelled most earthy still t'exist? Think you
Our power of vision will not fade so be

We reach not out and point to him the light?
If he, arising from his bed of clay,
Speed upward as with wings towards the goal
And pass us on the way, shall we rejoice?
That's test of spirit-strength. (In minor chords
Sometimes we hear the Master's gentlest touch
And learn his thought divine.)

Bright-gemmed the skies!

The angel of the covenant of peace
With steadfast purpose, searching eyes, draws nigh
To help men build out iron will a bridge
Across the yawning chasm of doubt, to plant
Anear the edge of every precipice
(Where life seems not worth while, oblivion sweet,)
The seeds of victory o'er self, send forth
The silver threads of spiritual desire.
A wondrous power those stars possess to draw
And fasten to themselves the glistening strands.
Immutable the law of glad response
To every soul's awakening cry, for none
Can fail to reach th' Eternal Father's heart
Nor find itself unsought. Forever blest
That sacrament divine when finite wills
Blend with the Infinite, and wondrously
Each heart's ascension proves heav'n's swift ap-
proach!

Why should we faint? Bathed in immortal rays
Of love and light and life, our eyes we turn
Towards the glory of the stars, and pray
We keep our vision bright.

FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN

We are so little, we who would to heaven attain!
Our words—we call them prayers—we upward
waft on wing

Too frail to bear them far from our weak frames.
Naught bring

We of a living, sacrificial gift, but stain
With grossest selfishness the all-enduring chain
Which links mankind to God. To earth we cling
E'en while with service of the lips, not heart, we
sing

"Let me but see Thy face," then moan that prayer
is vain.

So faithless we though on the brow Christ's sign is
worn,

So hopeless that our spirits have no anchorage,
So wayward that we fail to make our pilgrimage
A joy. Undisciplined, unsatisfied, we pawn
Our higher, nobler selves receiving dross outdrawn
From the great treasury of worldliness, nor gage
Redemption-price until fierce storms about us rage,
Our loss unknown till on reflection's waves we're
borne.

Would'st soar indeed to heaven's gates? Then find
thy place

Within th' arena vast of earth nor moment pause
To deem it great or small for thee. By nature's laws
Thy life must be fulfilled through growth. If thine
the grace

Content t'obey each duty's call the while thy face
Toward Jerusalem is turned then from the stores
Of faith and hope and love thou'lt gather that which
draws

Souls heavenward, th' ascent with pure desires keep
pace.

RECOMPENSE

Glad service makes true royalty, and they shall reign
as **Kings**
Who know not now the heritage that work for
others brings;
Nor dream because unselfish that their raiment glis-
tens white
As scattering waves of sunshine they themselves are
bathed in light.

WHEN SORROW COMES

God grant I take her by the hand and say
"We walk together, you and I, to bless
And not to bring unhappiness." Though day
To me may often clouded be I pray
For grace bestowed to patient weave her dress
Out loving thought, not vain regret, and find
The Star of Hope upon her breast to bind.

For sorrow comes
Not just a mocking echo of the past,
Not cruelly our hearts to stab and scar
For vengeance sake, not a destructive blast,—
But in her lies a moral strength of vast
Importance to men's souls, with large and far
Out-reaching possibilities like stairs
On which they climb to God—His thought made
theirs.

When Sorrow comes
And on her breast the Star of Hope she wears,
God grant my love more catholic may grow
That where (not mine the choice) I see the cares
Of aching souls, the hurts that no one bares
To pain-free eyes, there with my heart aglow
For thankfulness, my sorrow clad in white,
May I, the glory God's, sow peace, shed light.

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